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ABSTRACT

A mail survey of the 326 May and August, 1978, Essex Community College (ECC) graduates was conducted from November, 1978, to February, 1979, to collect demographic data, determine employment and educational status and anticipated needs for future services, and solicit evaluations of personnel service programs and the quality of academic preparation provided at ECC. The survey obtained a 49% return rate. The demographic data, which were comparable with data collected in 1976, showed that 70% of the graduates were over 25, 61% were female, 74% were black, and 40% were married. While 66% were employed and 53% indicated that their ECC experience provided good job preparation, no students reported using the ECC Placement Office. Most students (81%) planned to continue their education and 73% had already been accepted at other institutions. While most respondents found student services (with the exceptions of initial advisement and registration) to be good or excellent, significant percentages of the respondents requested additional assistance in transfer counseling (30%), job placement (53%), and personal or academic counseling (27%). The study report presents the findings in tables and graphs, making frequent comparisons with the 1976 survey findings. It concludes with a discussion of the job placement and counseling weaknesses revealed in the survey and presents recommendations for improvement. (JP)

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ED179268

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Office of Institutional Research

Research Report 79 - 2

1978 GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP

August, 1979

Prepared by:

Janice M. Karlen

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JC 790 660

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ABSTRACT

This graduate follow-up is based on responses to the ECC Graduate Follow-Up Questionnaire of 159 students (out of 326, or 49%) who graduated in May or August 1978. The questionnaire consisted of requests for demographic, employment and educational information.

Demographically, the following is noteworthy: 70% of the respondents were 25 or over; 61% were female; 74% were black; and 40% were married. Overall the demographic data is similar to the data reported in the 1976 follow-up study.

With regard to employment information, the following is noteworthy: 66% indicated they were employed; 56% found their job through individual effort (no students reported using the ECC Placement Office); 60% work over 35 hours per week; and, 35% have a projected minimum income of $10,800. Some 53% of the respondents indicated that their ECC program was good preparation for their current job; only 36% were satisfied with their present salary (up from 28% in 1976); and, approximately 50% felt their job was closely related to their academic program at ECC.

With regard to educational information, the following is noteworthy: 81% indicated they planned to continue their education (26% already were attending full-time and 21% part-time); 73% were already accepted by a college; finally, only 7% chose to go out of state. Approximately 85% indicated that ECC prepared them well for their future academic studies.

Graduates were also asked to evaluate student personnel services and to indicate if ECC could be of any further service to them. With the exception of initial advisement and registration, the majority of graduate respondents found services provided by Student Affairs to be good or excellent. With regard to requests for additional assistance, 30% requested transfer counseling assistance, 53% requested help finding a job and 27% requested personal or academic counseling.

The reader is encouraged to review the entire study.

INTRODUCTION

The 1978 Graduate Follow-Up Report is the third in a series of reports designed to find out what Essex County College graduates were doing and how they evaluated their educational experience here at ECC. In order to do this, students were asked to respond to a questionnaire consisting of requests for demographic, employment and education information, as well as several evaluative queries. Where possible, data from the 1976 Survey of Graduates has been included in the results for the purpose of comparison. The reader is cautioned that the data presented is self-reported and for respondents only.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for this study was the May 1978 and August 1978 graduates. The total population was 326 students, of whom 159, or 49 percent, filled out and returned the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used to collect the data from the graduates. The "Graduate Questionnaire" contains general demographic data questions, questions relating to the employment status, and to the educational status of the graduates. In addition, students were requested to evaluate student personnel service programs and the general academic preparation which they were given, as well as their anticipated need for future services. A copy of the questionnaire may be found in the appendix.

Procedure

The graduates were identified by the Registrar's Office. The questionnaires were mailed to them first in late November and early December of 1978 with a follow-up mailing in February 1979.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study have been grouped into four areas: demographic, employment, education and evaluation.

Demographic

The ages of the 1978 graduate respondents are presented in Table 1. In the 1976 report, 70% of the graduate respondents were 25 or over, as compared to 71% in the 1978 group.

Table 1.

Age (N=159)	Percent
19-20	3
21-24	21
25-29	20
30-39	36
40-49	6
50 & Above	9
No Response	5

The following Tables (2-5) provide comparative data in several categories for the 1976 and 1978 graduate respondents.

Table 2.

Sex	1976 (%) N=208	1978 (%) N=159
Male	29	38
Female	69	61
No Response	2	1

Table 3.

Race	1976 (%) N=208	1978 (%) N=159
Black	71	74
White	16	18
Hispanic	5	4
Other	0	1
No Response	8	3

Table 4.

Marital Status	1976 (%) N=208	1978 (%) N=159
Married	33	31
Divorced	16	12
Single	39	40
Separated	9	9
Widowed	1	6
No Response	2	2

Table 5.

Number of Children	1976 (%) N=208	1978 (%) N=159
None	34	33
One	13	23
Two	18	20
Three	11	7
Four	4	6
Five	3	3
Six or More	3	1
No Response	14	7

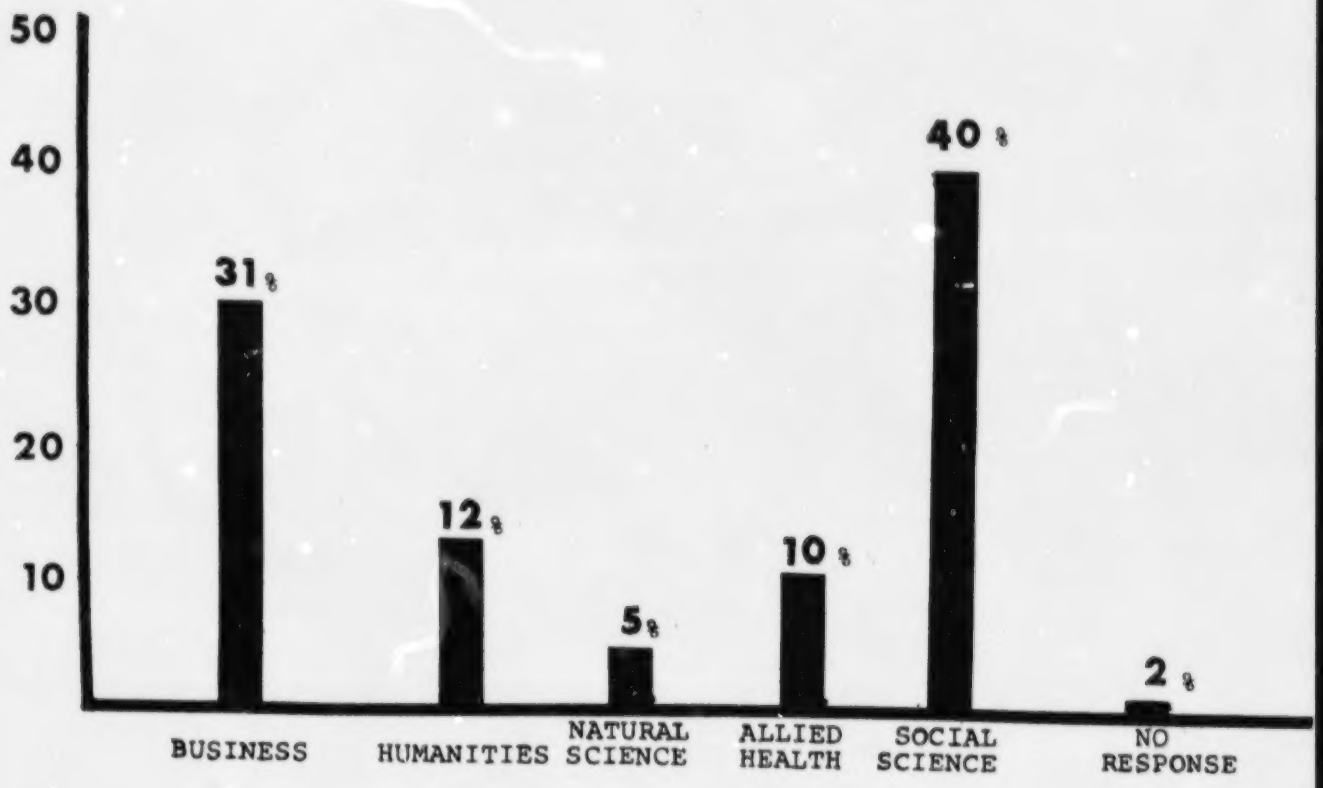
It is significant to note that the number of male respondents has risen from 29% in 1976 to 38% in 1978. In terms of race, almost three-fourths of the respondents were black; results that are very similar to the 1976 findings. The marital status of respondents exhibited no significant changes. There was a 10% increase from 1976 to 1978 in the number of respondents having one child. There was, however, a small drop in the percentage having no children.

Of the 1978 graduates, 40.3% report themselves as having been recipients of EOF, while 16.4% are reported veterans.

Graph 1 shows the breakdown of respondents by major area.

Graph 1
N= 139

GRADUATE RESPONDENT BY MAJOR AREA



As in the 1976 study, the largest number of respondents majored in a social science program at Essex County College, with business being the second highest choice.

Employment

Of the total group of 159, 104 graduates indicated that they were currently working. Some 79% of these commenced employment prior to their graduation from ECC. Table 6 contains the DOT job categories as related to the 1978 graduate respondents.

Table 6.

Job Category N=104	Percent
Professional, Technical & Managerial	33
Clerical & Sales	30
Service	28
Farming, Fishery & Forestry	1
Processing	5
Machine Trades	2
No Response	1

Tables 7-9 provide an analysis of several employment variables with reference to the 1978 graduate respondents.

Table 7.

Source of Job Placement (N=104)	Percent
ECC Placement Office	0
Relative	6
Friend	20
Newspaper	10
N.J. Employment Office	2
Individual Effort	56
No Response	6

Table 8.

Hours of Work Per Week (N=104)	Percent
Less than 10	1
11 - 15	1
16 - 20	3
21 - 25	1
26 - 30	7
31 - 35	19
36 - 40	53
Over 40	7
No Response	8

Table 9.

Gross Salary Per Month (N=104)	Percent
Less than $300	5
$301-$400	4
$401-$500	2
$501-$600	13
$601-$700	5
$701-$800	10
$801-$900	6
$901-$1,000	6
Over $1,000	29
No Response	20

It is worthy of note that three-fourths of the graduate respondents obtained their positions through individual effort or a friend. None of those responding were referred by the Essex County College Placement Office. At least 60% of the respondents can be considered to be full-time employees. Some 35% have a projected minimum annual income of $10,800.

The 1978 graduate respondents who were working were asked to respond to several statements designed to assess the relationship between their current occupation and their educational experience

at ECC. Their responses, as well as the responses of the 1976 graduates are included in Tables 10-13.

Table 10.

My ECC College Program was a good preparation for my present job	1976 (%) N=125	1978 (%) N=104
Strongly agree	25	20
Agree	25	33
Undecided	9	12
Disagree	26	21
Strongly disagree	15	14
No Response	-	-

Table 11.

I am satisfied with my present salary	1976 (%) N=125	1978 (%) N=104
Strongly agree	10	7
Agree	18	29
Undecided	17	14
Disagree	27	27
Strongly disagree	28	23
No Response	-	-

Table 12.

If I could do it over again, I would enroll in the same academic program at ECC	1976 (%) N=125	1978 (%) N=104
Strongly agree	33	33
Agree	26	31
Undecided	12	20
Disagree	9	7
Strongly disagree	10	9
No Response	-	-

Table 13.

My present work is closely related to my academic program at ECC	1976 (%) N=125	1978 (%) N=104
Strongly agree	21	24
Agree	31	26
Undecided	5	2
Disagree	24	28
Strongly disagree	19	20
No Response	-	-

Of note is the fact that 53% of the respondents agreed that their Essex County College program was good preparation for their present job. Some 36% of the 1978 respondents felt satisfied with their present salary, up from 28% in 1976. Only 16% said that, if given the opportunity, they would not enroll in the same academic program again. Half of the respondents felt that their present job was closely related to their academic program at ECC.

Education

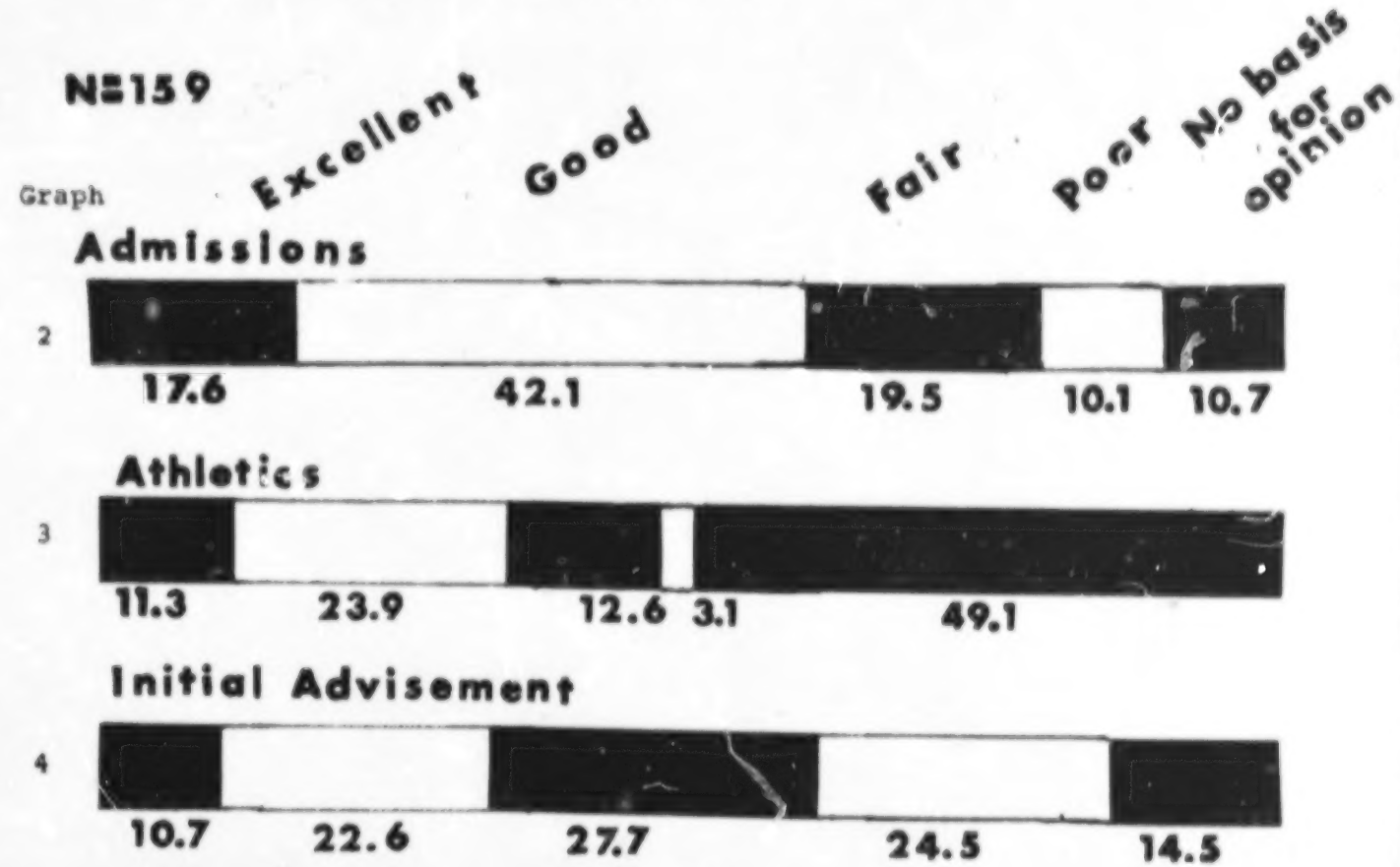
Of the 1978 graduate respondents, 81% indicated that they planned to transfer to another college after attending ECC. Some 26% were already attending full time, and 21% attending part time. Within the group that intended to further their education, 73% had already been accepted at their transfer institutions, with 55% preferring full time status. Most students (82%) chose to remain within the state in their choice of a college. Table 14 lists schools in or near Essex County and the percentages of students choosing to transfer to each.

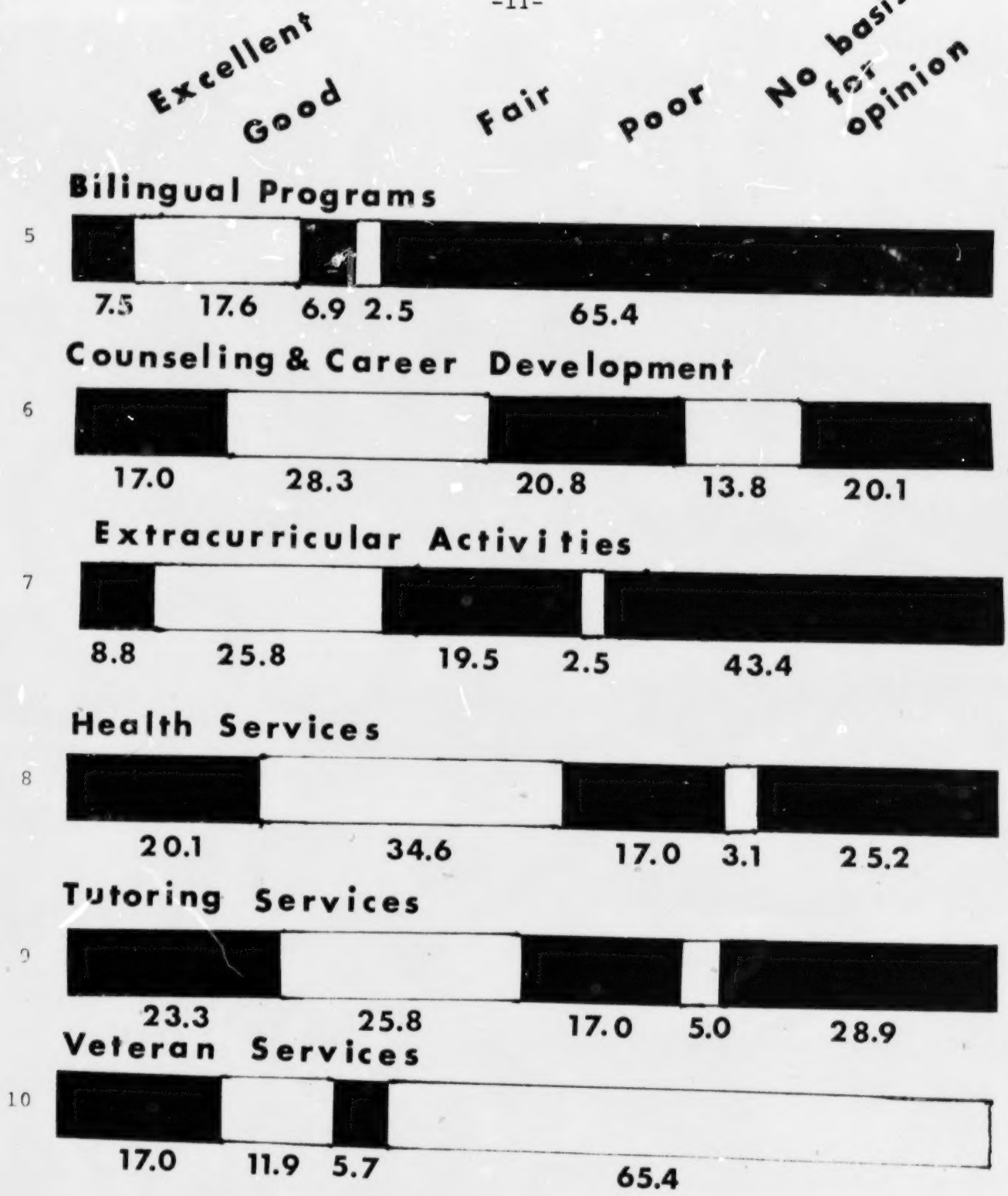
Table 14.

Institution (N=129)	Percent
Rutgers - Newark	39
Rutgers - New Brunswick	2
Montclair	4
Jersey City	9
Kean	5
Seton Hall	4
Upsala	3
Out-of-state	7
Other	16
No Response	11

Evaluation

The first area which the 1978 respondents were asked to evaluate was student personnel services. Graphs 2-14 illustrate the percent responses of the graduates.




Excellent
Good
Fair
poor
No basis for opinion
Bilingual Programs
5
7.5
17.6
6.9
2.5
65.4
Counseling & Career Development
6
17.0
28.3
20.8
13.8
20.1
Extracurricular Activities
7
8.8
25.8
19.5
2.5
43.4
Health Services
8
20.1
34.6
17.0
3.1
25.2
Tutoring Services
9
23.3
25.8
17.0
5.0
28.9
Veteran Services
10
17.0
11.9
5.7
65.4

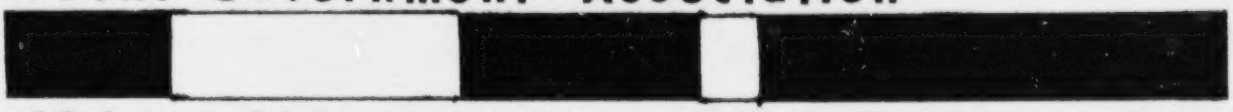
N=159

N=159

Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | No basis for opinion

Student Government Association

11



12.6 | 24.5 | 20.8 | 5.8 | 37.1

Class Scheduling

12

12.6 | 37.1 | 23.9 | 11.9 | 14.5

Financial Aid Assistance

13

14.5 | 23.5 | 17.0 | 18.9 | 26.4

Registration

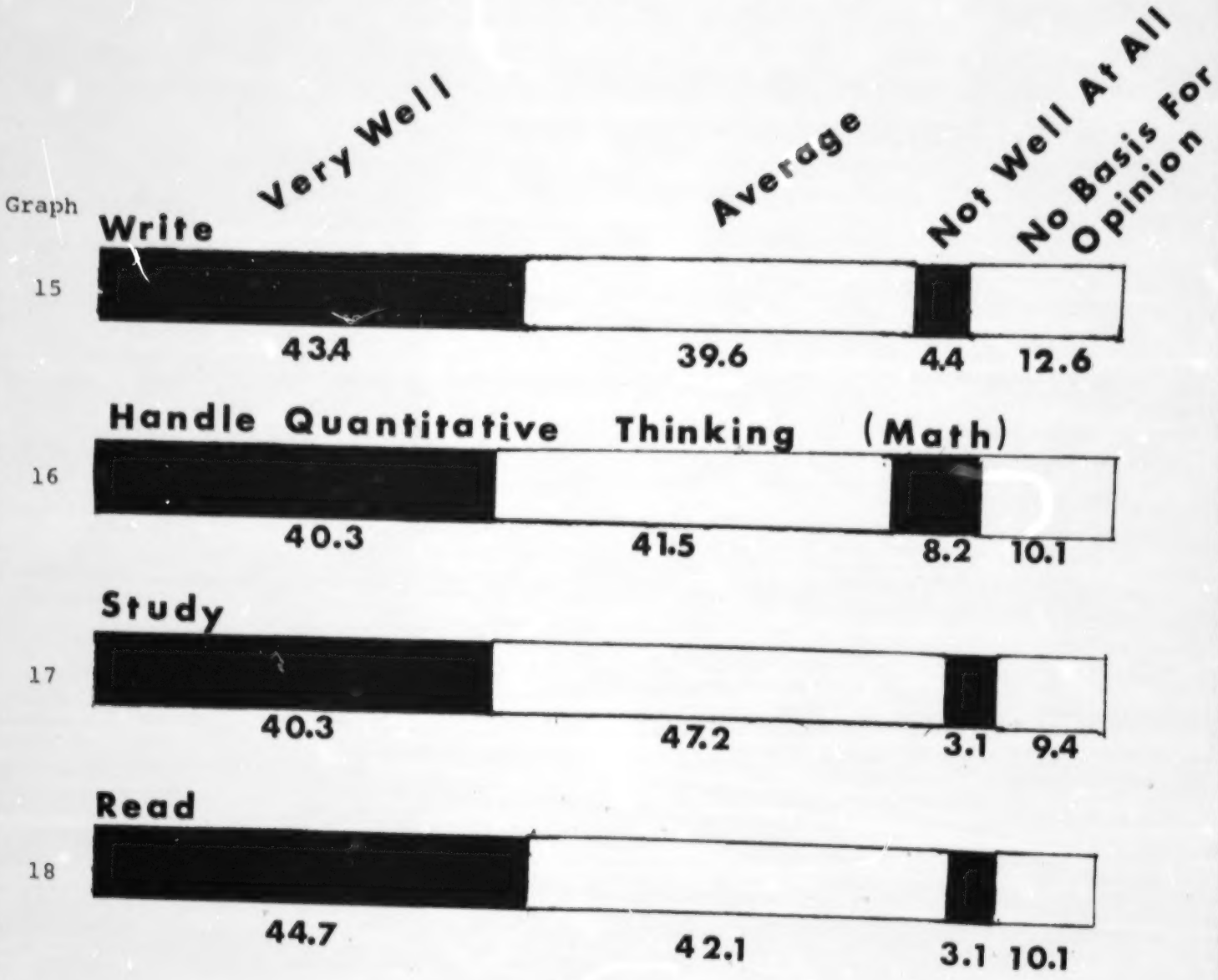
14

10.7 | 23.3 | 27.0 | 27.7 | 11.3

It should be noted that almost 60% of the respondents found the Admissions process to be good or excellent. While over 49% of the respondents had no basis for judging the Athletics program, 35% did find it positive. Initial advisement was an area which the respondents (52%) found fair or poor. Of those familiar with Bilingual Programs (35%), some 25% regarded them as good or excellent. Counseling and Career Development was rated by 45% in a positive manner. Some 35% of the respondents familiar with Extracurricular Activities (57%) found services to be good or excellent. Student Government Activities were approved by 37% with another 37% having no basis for opinion. Slightly more than half of those having had experience with Financial Aid Assistance rated it positive. Registration was found by 55% to be fair or poor. While one-fourth of the respondents had no opinion of Health Services, 55% agreed that it was good or excellent. Some 71% had availed themselves of tutoring services, with 70% of these giving a good or better response. Veterans Services were rated fair by only 6% while the good or excellent responses counted for 29% of those giving an opinion. The reader is encouraged to make a more detailed analysis of the data on the bar graphs pertaining to his/her particular concern.

The next area the respondents were asked to respond to concerned general preparation. Graphs 15-18 illustrate their responses.

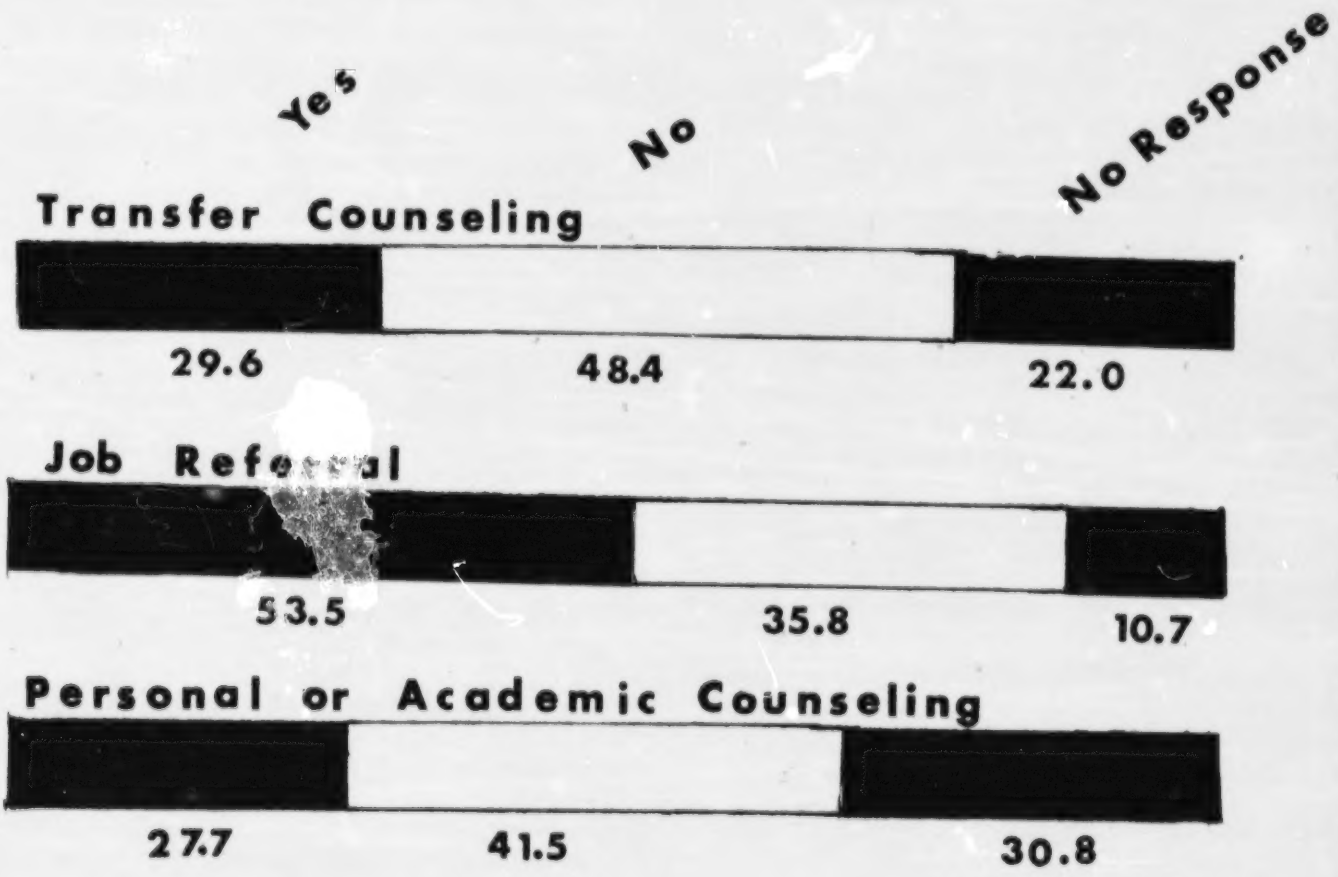
N= 159


Very Well
Average
Not Well At All
No Basis For Opinion
Graph
Write
15
43.4
39.6
4.4
12.6
Handle Quantitative Thinking (Math)
16
40.3
41.5
8.2
10.1
Study
17
40.3
47.2
3.1
9.4
Read
18
44.7
42.1
3.1
10.1

It is significant to note that 83% of the respondents felt that ECC prepared them to write at or above average. Some 82% felt themselves able to handle quantitative thinking well. While 88% felt themselves well prepared to study, 87% indicated that they were at or above average in reading preparedness.

Finally, the respondents were asked if they would like further assistance from ECC in any of several areas. Graphs 19-21 reflect their responses.

N=159



Of note in terms of requested services is that 30% of the respondents indicated a need for transfer counseling. Some 53.5% desired some form of job referral assistance, while 28% would like personal or academic counseling.

Other

The one non-quantifiable response was to the question, "How could your ECC program be improved?" While the majority of the respondents did not answer, the comments of many of those that did centered on the advisement and counseling processes, especially as related to graduation requirements, choice of a major, and job availability and placement. A representative sample of comments is available in Appendix 2.

SUMMARY

With regard to the general demographic characteristics of the respondents, the following should be noted: 1) 70% of the graduate respondents are age 25 or older; 2) the number of male respondents increased from 29% in 1976 to 38% in 1978; 3) 52% of the respondents are now or have been married; 4) 60% of the respondents have children; 5) of those responding, 40% were Social Science majors and 31% Business majors.

Concerning their employment status, of importance are: 1) 50% indicated individual effort as their source of job placement; 2) in 1978, only 50% indicated dissatisfaction with their salary as compared to 55% in 1976; 3) only 16% indicated that they would not enroll in the same academic program again; 4) 53% agreed that their academic program was good preparation for their present position; 5) 50% indicated that their work was closely related to their academic program.

In terms of further educational pursuits, the following should be noted: 1) a large percentage of graduate respondents would like to advance to a four-year institution; 2) those who choose to continue their education have little difficulty being admitted to another institution; 3) the largest single group of graduate respondents chose to transfer to Rutgers-Newark.

With reference to their evaluation of programs and preparation at ECC, the following are of note: 1) with the exception of initial advisement and registration, the majority of graduate respondents found the programs provided by student personnel services to be good or excellent; 2) most of the respondents felt that their

general preparation by ECC was at or above average; 3) 54% requested assistance from Essex County College with job referrals.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In reviewing the report, there are three areas of which special note should be made.

The institution should be pleased to note that a large number (81%) of the respondents plan to transfer to another institution and that 73% of those have already been accepted. Our graduate respondents, for the most part, do not consider Essex County College to be a terminal educational experience, but are sufficiently motivated to continue on. Moreover, those who do wish to further their education apparently have little or no difficulty in being accepted at the institution of their choice.

There appears to be some special problems in the area of employment. Ther respondents have indicated that none of them obtained their jobs through the Essex County College Placement Office. In their requests for further assistance, over half requested job referral aid. While it would be a natural reaction to immediately recommend a review of the College's Placement Office, the solution is not necessarily so simple. In another response, 35% of the respondents said that their college program was not good preparation for their present job. At the same time, 48% claimed that their work is not related to their academic program. While it may be significant that almost half of the respondents did not have related academic work and employment, it is of concern that 35% felt that their college program <u>did not prepare them</u> for their present employment. Although there is no means of ascertaining why this group did not feel prepared,

some basic issues should be raised. Are the institution's academic programs in line with the needs of the marketplace? Are our students aware of the career paths a particular program is designed as preparation? Are the institution's academic programs basic, yet flexible enough to provide the students with several employment alternatives?

These questions bring the next issue to light, that of advisement and counseling. The advisement process was rated negatively by 52% of the respondents, as well as being a primary topic of the institutional improvement comments. Not only were the respondents concerned with incorrect advisements, but that the advisement/counseling process did not seem to be concerned with choice of major and adequate career preparation.

From these two major problem areas should come a single solution - the preparation and establishment of a comprehensive program to inform students of career possibilities, the academic preparation needed to lead to a chosen field, the employment and salary potential of entering a particular career path and to provide a consistent approach to assisting the student in choice of courses and assistance in obtaining a job. To achieve this, some of the following actions may be appropriate:

1. To conduct surveys of some appropriate companies and social service agencies to learn what academic training they prefer their potential employees to have.
2. To relate these findings to college programs offerings and requirements and making adjustments where necessary.

3. To coordinate specific academic programs with specific job titles available.
4. To have an advisement process conducted by individuals who can relate the desires of the student in terms of career goals with available academic course offerings.
5. To design a formal procedure for waiving course requirements.

While this is by no means comprehensive, it does provide a beginning. The reader is invited to submit reactions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Essex County College
303 University Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Office of the Vice President
for Student Affairs

Appendix 1

GRADUATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____ ECC MAJOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Type of Degree: A.A. _____ A.A.S. _____ A.S. _____ Certificate_____

Sex: _____ Age: _____ Race: _____

Check One: Married _____ Single _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____

Widow(er) _____

Number of Children _____

Did you receive EOF while at ECC: Yes _____ No _____

Are you a veteran: Yes _____ No _____

1. Are you currently (mark as many as apply):

_____a. Employed full-time?
_____b. Employed part-time?
_____c. In college, full-time?
_____d. In college, part-time?
_____e. Homemaker?
_____f. Unemployed?
_____g. Other

2. What are your future plans (mark as many as apply):

_____a. Attend college full-time in the next year
_____b. Attend college part-time in the next year
_____c. Plan not to attend college at all in the near future.
_____d. Enter military service.
_____e. Enter Peace Corps.
_____f. Marriage/Homemaker
_____g. Travel
_____h. Have accepted an offer of full-time employment
_____i. Seeking full-time employment. If yes, where (what state). _____
_____j. No definite plans at this time.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

If you are currently employed (full or part-time) please answer questions 3 through 7 below. If not employed, please skip to question 8.

3. General Employment Information:

a. Employer: State:
City:
b. Job Title:
c. Date employment began: Month: Year:
d. What is your monthly salary before taxes (gross salary): $_____
e. Number of hours worked during your regular work-week: _____

4. What source did you use to locate your present job?

_____a. ECC Placement Office	_____d. Newspaper	_____g. Individual effort
_____b. Relative	_____e. Radio	
_____c. Friend	_____f. NJ State Employment Office	

5. If you are attending college, do you plan to work for the same employer after graduate? Yes_____ No _____
If No, what is the name of the prospective employer: _____ _____
Expected gross salary: $_____

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree to disagree with the following statements (circle one response for each statement):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
My ECC college program was a good preparation for my present job.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with my present salary.	1	2	3	4	5
If I could do it over again, I would enroll in the same academic program at ECC.	1	2	3	4	5
My present work is closely related to my academic program at ECC.	1	2	3	4	5

OVER

7. How could your ECC program be improved?_____

_____

_____

TRANSFER INFORMATION

8. Do you plan to transfer to another college? Yes___ No___ If yes, when?_____

If yes, do you plan to attend full-time___ or part-time___?

Name of college: Location:

Have you already been accepted by this college? Yes___ No___
If yes, will you attend full-time ___ or part-time___?

9. Is this transfer college your: ___1st choice ___2nd choice ___3rd choice?

10. If you have applied to more than one college please list the others to which you have applied.

11. What is your opinion of Essex County College's student personnel services programs? (Check only one response for each service listed)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Basis for Opinion
Admissions					
Athletics					
Initial Advisement					
Bilingual Programs					
Counseling & Career Development					
Extracurricular Activities					
Student Government Activities					
Class Scheduling					
Financial Aid Assistance					
Registration					
Health Services					
Tutoring Services					
Veteran Services					

12. How well did ECC prepare you to: (check only one)

	Very Well	Average	Not Well at All
a. Write			
b. Handle Quantitative Thinking (Math)			
c. Study			
d. Read			

13. Do you wish to be contacted by ECC for assistance in any of the following areas:

	Yes	No
Transfer Counseling		
Job Referral		
Personal or Academic Counseling		

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please return it to the Registrar's Office, Room 2100.

APPENDIX 2

"According to your major, students should be advised by qualified advisors as to what subjects they are required to take and not be told a month upon graduation that they should have taken this subject instead of that one."

"Advise students that when choosing elective courses they should related to field of study or be job related to gain knowledge necessary for future employment."

"By creating more interaction with counselors and students, this will result into a better all around attitude with student and school."

"More administrative effort concentrated on graduate job placement and counseling; interviewing techniques."

"Working in the major one would pursue, to get an idea of what type of work one is capable of doing."

"If students can be provided with industrial experience. Class work is quiet different from real world."

"By reaching out to the students and stressing more co-operation in the fields of advisement, placement, and financial aid assistance."

"The students should be helped more when picking out courses."

JAN 11 1980